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STRAY THOUGHTS,

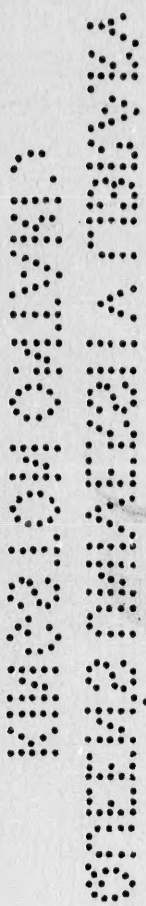
Collected for the Soiree, given by the Ladies of Clifton,

IN AID OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH,

9th March, 1858.

Proudly defiant old Niagara pours
Her surging waters through the fearful chasm
Of fretted rocks impassable,
Or else; but through a power beyond the ken
Or conjuration of the red man's medicine,
His Sachems, or within
The circle of his wild imaginings,
Here, even here; and long with awe
And thrilling wonder had the pale-face gaz'd,
Dumb with confessional of impotence;
Hence did the rank weeds and the tangled brake
Of darkling shelter grow
Noxiously luxuriant.
Meet harbor, dark and dank,
Abode of reptiles, venomous and vile.
And scarcely now ten times have forests been
Unclothed and bare, to wintry blasts expos'd;
Since here—as in all places subject to
The universal law of change,
Imperative in nature's rule—
Has change appear'd;
And what a change!

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The white man, basking in the genial rays
Of gospel light, learns that his origin
Is more than earthly ;
That his powers, expansive as eternity,
Are limitless in the acquiring
Of knowledge, and by knowledge, power.
See here this power evinced—man's art
The impossible achieves, and side by side;
For human wonder,
Man's genius manifest,
With nature's handiwork ; magnificent !
Sublime !
Where erst with solemn shade the towering trees,
A forest temple for the feather'd tribes,
Resounded with the melody of nature's gladness,
Now tapering to the skies, amidst the busy strife
Of civilized industry and commerce,
Encompassed with the screeching engines,
Loudly indicative
Of haste, and bustle, and employment.
The graceful steeple heavenward points,
And tells of man's abstraction from
The cares of time ; one day in seven
To ponder on eternity,
And meet in unison for prayer and praise,
And lessoning in duty and obedience.
Nor yet in vain appears the effort, thus
To harmonize the various tendencies,
And blend, for the grand end,
Distinctions minor, nor essential.
These while maintained, nor sought to be disturb'd,
Together see denominational proclivities,
Of race, or class, or creed arising,
Here joyously assembled.
All hail ! my friends, my benison be on you,
God bless this effort, its object and its end
Bless, for future harmony in working.
For each particular and for general good,

In concert of a common brotherhood,
Of God's own children—
Fair faces numerous surround me here,
Set on fair forms of beauty,
The radiant light of grace, benignity and zeal
Beams from the Peerless eyes
Of Clifton's Peerless Maidens !
As present at this joyous feast, with Clifton's Matrons,
At once their guides, their patterns, and exemplars,
They join in concert with true hearts
Of stalwart and industrious men ;
For here, too, are in force assembl'd,
Brave men and true, of energy and action,
Providers and protectors, not surpass'd
For industry and effort in the race
Of life ; be it for purpose personal or for
The common weal.
Here come they and present themselves,—
Laying aside their usual occupation,—
To aid and countenance
This Festival of charity and love ;
Here congregated, too, benevolent and kind—
Strangers appear, some far, some near,
And some of other creeds political,
The citizens of other rule :
Yet though of different form and system
The Government they own and prize,
Still change aught else whate'er they may.
The Anglo-Saxon heart, of purpose charitable,
Responsive beats in sympathy and love
To Anglo-Saxon need ;
And hence they're here, and yet
Perhaps an added cause, arising from
The blood's admixture, of impetuosity
And strife, on acquisition bent ;
Restless, and curious, all curious sights
And strange to witness, moves to share
Our social glee ;
Seizing so rich occasion, free to bask

In smiles from stately dames
And maidens fair,
Rich in Canadian healthiness and beauty,
Or this, or that the cause, or both conjoined,
Or whate'er else—we bid them welcome—
The while to virtue and propriety to pay
Your bounden homage, not forgetful,
Nor ceasing, or in word, or look, or action
To do them reverence.
Let's all this feast of reason free partake,
Let flow of soul gush streaming forth,
The fleeting hours, big with enjoyment,
Wait not, but court their occupation,
Enjoy them then ;—
Let mirth and wit abound,
Jocund and gay,—
Be happy now, and happiness,
Be yours for aye.